

IS THAT SO? WOULD YOU BELIEVE?

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In the 1960s, my father's hobby was inventing games. Although none of his games was ever accepted by a major publishing company, a few were printed locally and sold for a short time in the central Michigan area. One of his games, unfortunately named Izzat So by the publishers (another edition was called Wud-U-Blev), was my particular favorite. In Izzat So, players reassembled proverbs which had been printed on small cardboard tiles and divided into three pieces.

Incredibly, my future husband's parents bought a copy of the game, and this copy I proudly presented to my own daughters recently, explaining how Grandpa and Mommy had spent hours play-testing and developing this wonderful game. It was while I was teaching my oldest daughter, Megan, to play Izzat So that I rediscovered what had given me the most joy 25 years ago. What fun it was to rearrange the tiles and form new proverbs--maxims with a ring of, well, not-quite-truth, such as Beauty is but skin deep, and Beauty is the best cook.

Even my six-year-old, Jericho, enjoys this variation of the game; for example, she coined the saying Don't bite before spilled milk.

Following are some of my favorite neo-adages. I formed them in several ways: in Group A, the initial tiles were switched; in Group B, the middle tiles; in Group C, the final tiles; and in Group D, I just fiddled around until I came up with something appealing, often combining more than three tiles. Part of the charm, of course, is imagining a context in which these "new saws" might be spoken, with appropriate grandmotherly wisdom.

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| Group A | Don't bite a pig in a poke Every dog has the disease Misery begins at home Don't cry in a storm Time is but skin deep Beggars teach an old dog new tricks |
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| Group B | The early hands make the worm One rotten bird gets the barrel Curiosity knocks the cat Rome was sleeping in a day A bad broom comes back Pride loves to hear a fall |
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| Group C | The early bird gets big ears |
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Beggars can't be in one basket
 What goes up must grind slowly
 One rotten apple spoils the worm
 Every mule loves to hear fertilizer
 Don't put all our eggs in the mouth

Group D All your eggs are a devil's broom
 A fool and a pig grind slowly
 Pitchers have no moss in the mouth
 No fool goeth before the wheels
 Never buy pot while the mice will play
 Little of the pudding killed the worm
 A gift horse glitters like an apple spoils
 If the best cook can't be at home, there is smoke
 Sleeping together in one basket heals all
 Big ears don't look in a workshop

For those of you who are unable to recognize all of the proverbs by their components, the entire list of Izzat So proverbs is given below. I hope some other Word Ways readers are fortunate enough to own a copy of Bob Worgul's game. If you do not, perhaps you'll enjoy creating your own neo-adages. I'd like to hear about your favorites; write me at 808 North Cherry St., Three Oaks MI 49128.

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| Hunger is the best cook | Don't bite the hand that feeds you |
| Beauty is but skin deep | The cure is worse than the disease |
| Look before you leap | One rotten apple spoils the barrel |
| Don't cry over spilled milk | Every mule loves to hear himself bray |
| Never buy a pig in a poke | The wheels of justice grind slowly |
| Every dog has his day | Snow is the poor man's fertilizer |
| Misery loves company | Don't look a gift horse in the mouth |
| Charity begins at home | Idle hands are a devil's workshop |
| Any port in a storm | A fool and his money are soon parted |
| Time heals all wounds | A rolling stone gathers no moss |
| Beggars can't be choosers | Make hay while the sun shines |
| The early bird gets the worm | When the cat's away the mice will play |
| Many hands make light work | The proof of the pudding is in the eating |
| Curiosity killed the cat | All that glitters is not gold |
| Rome was not built in a day | Where there is smoke there is fire |
| Let sleeping dogs lie | Birds of a feather flock together |
| A bad penny always comes back | The pen is mightier than the sword |
| A new broom sweeps clean | You can't tell a book by its cover |
| Pride goeth before a fall | A penny saved is a penny earned |
| Opportunity knocks but once | You can't teach an old dog new tricks |
| Little pitchers have big ears | Time and tide wait for no man |
| Honesty is the best policy | A great ship asks deep waters |
| What goes up must come down | Those who play with fire get burned |
| No fool like an old fool | Strike while the iron is hot |
| A watched pot never boils | Too many cooks spoil the broth |
| If the shoe fits wear it | Variety is the spice of life |
| Still waters run deep | An apple a day keeps the doctor away |
| A stitch in time saves nine | There is small choice in rotten apples |
| A calm portends a storm | Don't put all your eggs in one basket |